

Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

Park Plaza, Rimini Room, Helena

Next meeting dates, subject to confirmation, are **January 17 and June 4, 2008**.

Minutes

Vice President Peter Bogy called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM. Also in attendance: Jackie Vick, Matthew Savery, Gordon Johnson, B.J. Carlson, Alan Satterlee, Toot Sward, B. J. Carlson, Karen Porter, Maggie Lou Perkes, Carolyn Valacich, Jan Wolter, Marty Cowgill, Allan R. Scott, Tawna Parisot, Mary Williams, John Driscoll, Darko Butorac; Arni Fishbaugh and Kristin Han Burgoyne, Montana Arts Council; and John Barsness, staff. John B. attempted to connect with Sandi Culhane in Billings via speakerphone, but the machine apparently was on permanent "mute" so a satisfactory connection was not possible.

New members were introduced and greeted.

Minutes

Motion by Allan, Carolyn second, to accept minutes as published; there was unanimous approval.

Financial Report

John B. presented the financial report for the 2007 fiscal year, end as of June 30, although connection with Treasurer Nancy Lewis was not successful during the summer due to conflicting schedules. Discussion centered on revenue from license plate sales. There has been very little activity during the summer, although license plate sales appear to be down. Executive Directors will continue to promote the plate in programs and to their memberships; Arni asked for an article and illustration for *State of the Arts* publication to keep up interest and John B. will provide as soon as possible. Motion from Karen, Mary W. second, to accept financial report; approval was unanimous.

Public comment Since no members of the public were present there were no public comments.

Old Business

Volunteer Award

Since there was only one nomination, the board decided to extend the nomination period to November 15. John B. will be out of the office from November 7 through the 19th and will process nominations as quickly as possible upon return. Peter noted the award has been made late before. The same committee will meet via e-mail or teleconference by December 31 and bring a recommendation to the January meeting for ratification; award will be made sometime in the spring following that meeting.

NPR "From The Top" update

Jackie reported there were three Montana musicians selected, with one being a quartet, and two were MASO Young Artist Competition winners. Other young musicians will be brought from out-of-state for the taping which will take place in Bozeman at the Willson Auditorium on October 4; broadcast is tentatively December 13, so check with local Public Radio affiliates for exact times as they will vary.

Spring ASOL Workshop

There was much discussion, and some second-guessing of intentions, regarding ASOL's cancellation of the Billings workshop. The general reaction was one of being somewhat miffed and the reason seemed more an alibi. Apparently there was unintended bi-level communication. Everyone MASO believed "regional workshop" referred to serving a geographic area--whereas ASOL meant serving a member out in one of their regions. Someday it will be humorous. Although Billings' volunteer guild dissolved, Bozeman and Missoula have active and successful guilds. A key factor also is to find the wife of a retired Colonel who will help organize, since that is familiar territory, and they are all skilled in recruiting volunteers by retirement time. Given changes going on with the national organization, it was agreed we should not beat up on ASOL and instead remain positive, try again, and extend an invitation for the following year--this time with definitions agreed in advance. Peter asked for a volunteer committee to create a plan for MASO to approach ASOL. The committee will include John D., Jackie, Alan S., and Karen. They will convene separately by phone or e-mail and report back at the January meeting.

New Business

Montana Arts Council

Arni reminded everyone who could not submit their final reports by September 15 to put an extension request in writing. Kristin added that written requests filed by the 15th would be honored. The State agency is busy with finishing their National Endowment for the Arts Basic State Grant request which will be good for the next three years. They are also putting the finishing touches on their strategic plan, based on statewide public comments, to be in effect for the next five years. They are also scheduled to move their office this month, although it looks like the first week of October is more likely, and there will be an announcement in the State of the Arts newsletter (to the old Florence Crittenden Home, corner of Warren and Helena).

Budget for FY2008

John B. presented a draft budget for the year, with written narrative for line items; Treasurer Nancy Lewis also received copies, but had not had a chance to respond yet. Although there was general agreement to approve the budget, since there were no significant changes from the past year, Peter requested an ad hoc committee to address putting the statements in a more understandable format. Arni volunteered MAC's financial wizard Carleen Layne as an additional resource.

Other New Business

ASOL: there was consensus there should be more communication as well as a long-term relationship. The big guys are re-tooling, therefore the mid-size orchestras are leading the way and bucking the national trends. For executive directors ASOL has a message listserv that is very helpful in finding answers to questions. ASOL also has two tech people on call for members. At a future meeting, MASO could consider subsidizing a member's attendance at the national conference to represent MASO.

Just prior to the lunch break Peter asked for a moment of silence to direct our thoughts to Bill Larson's wife Jane.

Orchestra Reports See attached.

Break Out Sessions

Music Directors, Executive Directors, and Members at large, met separately at 1:00 PM to discuss specific issues of interest. The board reconvened at 2:00 PM for wrap up.

Reports:

Music Directors: Allan reported the four music directors present met to discuss the MASO Young Artist Competition. As the incoming chair for the next competition in January 2009, he will respond to all music directors via e-mail with a summary of the conversation.

We reviewed the 2007 YAC under 2007 Gordon Johnson and briefly reviewed several things, especially the wonderful evening we had at Matthew's office the night before!

We then discussed several view points of a proposal submitted by Bozeman Symphony Concertmistress Carrie Krause. The proposal suggested adding an additional age group in the competition (currently there are Junior 13-15, Senior 16-19, and College levels post high school to 22). The new level would be for an age group younger than the Junior age group. The proposal pointed out that there are several talented young musicians that would be worthy of a competition under 13 years of age. The proposal also stressed the importance of this younger division to also guarantee a performance like the current three division winners also guarantees the winners a performance with at least one MASO organization (per the changes we made to the rules of the MASO YAC at our music director meeting in December 2005).

The music directors present (Darko, Gordon, Matthew, and Allan) looked at several viewpoints. In general, we were all in favor of the young age division; however, several points needed to be decided and considered.

There was not a general consensus that a winner from the younger age group (no name was given to the proposed category) would be guaranteed a performance. In fact, if a performance were not guaranteed most seem to sign on to the idea now. We also agreed that if we did move on this and adopted a new category it would set a precedent for future competitions, so we wanted to make an informed decision as it would be difficult to go back after a new age group was adopted.

Finally we realized that if a new age group were included in the competition, then it would allow fewer spots for the other age groups in the competition, as the one day competition can take an absolute maximum of 20-22 competitors total for the day. There was no discussion of spreading the competition out over more than one day. One result of fewer positions would be the preliminary rounds (which are done via recordings) would be far more competitive and the final round (via live performance with piano accompaniment at the competition) would be even more competitive.

While we all agreed in theory to the proposed idea, many decisions about logistics and precedent-setting events still remained unanswered. We decided to revisit this meeting at a December 2007 meeting with as many music directors as possible in Helena, as December seems to work for many since most of us are in Montana for the first couple of weeks.

Executive Directors did not have a report.

Members-at-large:

Continuing the ASOL discussion and extending it to operas: with community, administrative level, and educational outreach there is strength in numbers. Is there a similar organization nationally comparable to MASO with opera members? John B. will ask and report back at January meeting. It is an intriguing idea, but tabled until the next meeting.

The notion of a Montana resident composer and/or contest was discussed. Some questions were: who uses composers, who are they, how are they contacted/contracted, what is the connection to the orchestra? It may be possible to hold a Young Composer's Contest in the off-years from the Young Artist Competition. There is a full spectrum of competitions nationally, where would Montana fit? Perhaps these are questions for the Music Directors to consider. This item will remain on the table until a later meeting

Other items: For Glacier Park's 100th anniversary, Glacier Orchestra was asked to join and coordinate a celebration.

Fund raising strategies, ideas, and successful practices include: bringing donors to the next level and incentives to give significantly more, special catered dinners, silent auctions (although some things work better than others). Conclusion: don't be bashful about anything and ask your donors.

Next meeting dates, subject to confirmation with Billings, are **January 9 and May 14, 2008**.

Motion from Marty, Jan second, to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
John C. Barsness, Executive Director

Task list:

Committee to create a plan to approach ASOL: John D., Jackie, Alan S., and Karen; convene prior to report back at the January meeting.

Volunteer Award committee: meet in December and select a nominee for January meeting ratification.

Staff: 1.) solicit further Volunteer Award nominations & distribute to committee, 2.) research interface of operas and orchestra organizations, 3.) arrange teleconference for ASOL committee.

Addendum to Minutes of September 12, 2007

What staff could find in a brief search for Orchestra-Opera Interface appears to be at the musician, and not organizational, level:

International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM).

Founded in 1962, the mission of ICSOM is to promote a better and more rewarding livelihood for the skilled orchestral performer and to enrich the cultural life of our society. ICSOM now represents over 4,000 musicians from the top 52 American Federation of Musician orchestras in the United States and Puerto Rico.